

CLAIMS:

1. A device, referred to as set-top box, comprising:
- means for receiving audio/video data transmitted via a communication medium,
 - at least one application using said received audio/video data and necessitating
5 their storage prior to their use, the application comprising means for issuing requests for storage/retrieval of the received data,
 - storage means comprising:
 - means for connection to at least one peripheral storage unit which is capable
10 of physically storing audio/video data,
 - means for detecting peripheral equipment co-operating with said connection
means for detecting the presence of peripheral storage units as from their
connection/disconnection to/from the set-top box,
 - control means co-operating with the detection means for receiving said
requests for storage/retrieval of data issued by the application and for controlling the
15 assignment of physical storage addresses in the different peripheral storage units which are
present,
 - software storage means co-operating with said control means for preserving
and retrieving the physical addresses of the data stored in the different peripheral storage
units.
- 20
2. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the software storage means comprise a mapping table which is updated by said control means comprising the virtual addresses of the data to be stored for assigning a physical storage address to them, corresponding to a memory space reserved in a peripheral storage unit.
- 25
3. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the control means comprise a manager for updating said software storage means as a function of the requests for storage/retrieval of the data and of the peripheral storage units which are present or are detected at the instant of the requests.

4. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the control means comprise interface means with the application for receiving and interpreting the storage/retrieval requests in terms of repartitioning the data stored in the different peripheral units as a function of predetermined storage criteria.
- 5
5. A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one predetermined criterion is related to the rate at which the audio/video data must be stored/retrieved.
6. A device as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one predetermined criterion is
- 10 related to the security of the stored audio/video data.
7. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the control means comprise interface means with the application for receiving and interpreting the storage/retrieval requests in terms of repartitioning the data stored in the different peripheral units as a function of
- 15 application needs.
8. A device as claimed in claim 7, wherein the interface means comprise a list of services allowing communication with the application with a view to determining a preferred storage method to be used for said application.
- 20
9. A device, referred to as set-top box, comprising:
- means for receiving audio/video data transmitted via a communication medium,
 - at least one application using said received audio/video data and necessitating

25 their storage prior to their use, the application comprising means for issuing requests for storage/retrieval of the received data,

 - means for connection to at least one peripheral storage unit which is capable of physically storing audio/video data.
- 30
10. A storage method comprising the steps of:
- detecting peripheral equipment for detecting the presence of peripheral storage units as from their connection/disconnection to/from a set-top box,
 - receiving a request for storage/retrieval of audio/video data issued by an application using said audio/video data and necessitating their storage prior to their use,

- controlling the assignment of physical storage addresses in the different peripheral storage units that are detected, and
- software storage for preserving and retrieving the physical addresses of the data stored in the different peripheral storage units.